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## MIDDLE EAST – AFRICA – SOUTH ASIA

This publication is prepared for regional specialists in the Washington community by the Middle East - Africa Division, Office of Current Intelligence, with occasional contributions from other offices within the Directorate of Intelligence. Comments and queries are welcome. They should be directed to the authors of the individual articles.

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Qatar

*Winds of Change*

Since independence in 1971, the ruling al-Thanis of Qatar have prided themselves on their ability to keep a grip on the levers of power in spite of conflict within the sprawling and quarrelsome family and of some signs of discontent in the population. As Qatars become more exposed to foreign influences, however, a realignment of forces that cuts across family, class, and ethnic lines seems inevitable at some point.

Although the Qatari political scene is outwardly calm, tensions between classes and between ethnic groups are a headache to Emir Khalifah who seized power in a palace coup in 1972. The ruler's promulgation of a rent control law last February, for example, was a popular measure among tenants but it alienated wealthy landlords. Many landlords, including influential members of the al-Thani family, are ignoring the law and are insisting that their tenants pay increased rents.

Hostility between indigenous Qatars who are not members of the large al-Thani clan and Qatars of Iranian origin simmers beneath the surface. In both groups, resentment of al-Thani rule is not uncommon. Members of both groups find their ability to rise in the various ministries limited by the al-Thanis and expatriates above them who block promotions.



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Non-citizen Arabs in Qatar who aspire to the added security that would come with citizenship are frustrated by the government's extremely restrictive

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naturalization laws. They resent, moreover, the government's policy of easy entry for Iranians and South Asian workers who are mainly interested in making money and are more easily controlled than the politically activist Arabs.

None of these disgruntled groups are sufficiently powerful or numerous to pose a threat over the short term to al-Thani rule nor have any significant clandestine radical organizations been identified in Qatar.

The more immediate threats to Emir Khalifah's hold on power stem from within the al-Thanis. Khalifah's style of one-man rule is making him increasingly unpopular among members of the family. He recently drew much criticism from the al-Thanis by allowing, without consulting his kinsmen, the ousted emir to return to Qatar from exile in Dubai. Moreover, younger members of the family are being alienated by the ruler's retention [redacted]

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Adding to differences in the family is the Emir's failure to face up to the problem of naming a Crown Prince. The Emir is reluctant to act because he believes the appointment of a Crown Prince would trigger an open struggle for power among the three main branches of the family. If an open conflict among the al-Thanis develops over the succession, two of the main contenders will be the commander of the armed forces and the commandant of the police force, the Emir's son and nephew, respectively. Also to be reckoned with in the power equation are the large mercenary forces employed by the feudal-like al-Thani sheikhs. Made up of bedouin retainers recruited in Saudi Arabia, the mercenaries are bivouacked in garrisons on the farms of al-Thani notables. (SECRET NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM)

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Nigeria

*Tighter Press Control*

The new military regime is moving to assert more effective government control over more than 100 newspapers and periodicals published in Nigeria. The press, whether owned independently or government controlled, has retained considerable freedom during most of the nine years the military has run the country; in the past year it had become increasingly critical of military rule.

The federal government recently announced that it had taken 60 percent ownership in the independent *Daily Times*, the largest and most influential paper, and the second largest paper, the *New Nigerian*. The latter is published by a company jointly owned by Nigeria's six northern states.

A national news agency and a new federally-owned newspaper will be set up soon, according to regime's director of information. Both projects were included in the five-year plan introduced last April by former head of state General Gowon. The information director said that the news agency would become the sole source in Nigeria for national and international news. The new paper will replace the former official organ of the central government, the lackluster *Morning Post*, which was shut down earlier this year.

The new regime's view of the press was outlined at a press conference last month by Brigadier Obasanjo, the armed forces chief of staff and the number two man in the government. He said the press has a dual role of publicizing government views and activities as well as disseminating news and that it should avoid sensationalizing sensitive national issues.

Nigerian editors and publishers can be expected to resist government pressure to parrot the official line. For now, they are likely to behave circumspectly for fear of provoking even tighter clamps on press freedom. (CONFIDENTIAL)

China-Tanzania

*A Major Investment for Peking*

Festivities surrounding the formal completion of the five-year, \$402-million Tan-Zam railroad project in Dar es Salaam this fall and the probable attendance of a high-ranking Chinese delegation will bring into focus Peking's heavy investment in Tanzania. President Nyerere's government is, in fact, the leading African recipient of Chinese economic aid and the second leading recipient worldwide of military assistance from Peking.

The Chinese will maintain a significant aid program and large numbers of personnel in Tanzania well beyond ribbon-cutting ceremonies on the Tan-Zam line. Although the arrangements are not yet final, several hundred technicians will probably stay on to assist in operating and managing the railroad. The continued presence of about 300 Chinese now working on several small rural development and construction projects and of some 750 Chinese military advisers also seems assured. Under a \$74-million agreement signed by Peking and Dar es Salaam last year, the Chinese have also agreed to construct two rail spurs into coal- and iron-rich areas in northwestern Tanzania and to help develop these resources.

Despite its scope and expense, the Chinese effort in Tanzania is not aimed primarily at short-term economic and political goals within the country itself. On the economic front, the Tanzanians have little that China needs in terms of raw materials and the Tanzanian market is a minuscule one for the Chinese. Politically, Peking certainly values Dar es Salaam as a reliable diplomatic ally and is undoubtedly pleased that Nyerere has borrowed from the Chinese model for his own domestic programs.

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Such gains, however, could probably have been achieved with much less expense, and Peking clearly views its considerable investment in Tanzania in terms of the long haul and the larger African--and Third World--context. On this broader plane, Peking has attempted to create in its aid program in Tanzania a model demonstrating to other African and developing countries China's willingness to extend generous and politically untied aid without any danger of foreign subversion or interference in internal affairs. To this end, the Chinese have applied themselves to their aid projects in Tanzania with unusual energy--particularly the Tan-Zam project, which will be completed well ahead of schedule--while carefully avoiding any impression that they are pressing for direct influence over the country. Peking, in fact, has gone so far to limit the impact of its large presence on the domestic scene in Tanzania as to provoke some criticism from Tanzanian officials. The low key Chinese approach has had the overall effect, however, of building trust and allaying suspicions both in Dar es Salaam and elsewhere in the region.

The establishment of durable relations between Peking and Dar es Salaam has also given the Chinese an important leg up in their competition with Moscow for influence with regional black nationalist movements. Peking has long acted as Tanzania's agent in training and equipping various guerrilla groups. This direct Chinese access and backing from the influential Nyerere were instrumental in gaining Peking the inside track with Samora Machel's forces in Mozambique. The Chinese are moving in a similiar manner to develop a strong position in Rhodesia, where Peking long backed the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and has recently stated its willingness to train and equip the joint forces of the African National Council--an umbrella organization which has absorbed ZANU and other Rhodesian nationalist groups. The breakdown last week of talks between Council leaders and Salisbury and the increased possibility that

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guerrilla operations might resume in Rhodesia have played comfortably into Peking's hand.

While China is on the whole probably satisfied with the returns from its commitment to Tanzania, the relationship has not been without its strains. Strident Chinese calls for "armed struggle" in southern Africa and repeated warnings that efforts at compromise between black nationalists and the white-minority governments were "political deceptions" leave little doubt over Peking's displeasure with Nyerere's--and Zambian President Kaunda's--support for talks between Salisbury and the Rhodesian nationalist groups. Peking has also had to draw the line on continued requests for arms from Dar es Salaam and can only view as ingratitude Tanzanian questioning of the quality of equipment already delivered. Tanzania's acceptance of \$74 million of Soviet military assistance in 1974 undoubtedly increased Chinese irritation. Peking has been willing to play down such frictions, however, and this is another measure of the central role Tanzania has played and will continue to play in China's strategy in the area. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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Sri Lanka

*Trotskyite Party Ousted from Cabinet*

Prime Minister Sirimavo Bandaranaike's expulsion from the cabinet yesterday of representatives of the Trotskyite Lanka Sama Samaja Party, her principal partner in the governing coalition since its formation in 1970, will not threaten her government's support in parliament. Bandaranaike's Sri Lanka Freedom Party holds a comfortable majority on its own. The third and smallest party in the former coalition, the Moscow-oriented Communist Party, will retain its one cabinet post.

With the Trotskyites out of the government, the Prime Minister may be more receptive to recommendations of her moderate advisers, but she probably will not abandon her socialist and welfare-oriented domestic policies. She almost certainly will continue Sri Lanka's nonaligned foreign policy.

The cabinet shuffle--the country's first in five years--was touched off by a dispute between the two parties over which one would exercise ministerial control over tea plantations the government plans to nationalize. The two parties were able to smooth over differences in the past, in part because the leftist party has been reluctant to lose the influence and patronage it had accumulated as a member of the governing coalition. This time Bandaranaike apparently had enough of inter-party bickering, she may want to avoid such distractions while she prepares for the nonaligned summit conference to be held in Sri Lanka next August.

The Trotskyites have considerable strength in urban areas where the party's support among labor unions is concentrated. More radical elements in the party may eventually try to cause trouble for the government--possibly through labor unrest--but so far there is no evidence the party plans any early move in retaliation for its expulsion from the cabinet.

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Bandaranaike has named cabinet ministers from her own party to fill the three posts vacated by the leftist party. Justice Minister Felix Bandaranaike, a distant relative of the Prime Minister and a leading moderate in the cabinet, has been given the important finance portfolio. (CONFIDENTIAL)

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